

# **"The Significance of Yorktown"**

An Address by CHARLES H. MACDOWELL, at the  
Annual Yorktown Dinner of the Illinois  
Chapter, Sons of the American  
Revolution

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## “The Significance of Yorktown”

YORKTOWN was the culmination of a family row and was an extremely dramatic incident.

Let us visualize it.

It was high noon; the day the Nineteenth, the month October, the year seventeen hundred and eighty-one, the place Yorktown, Virginia, and its harbor. The pines were saluting the sea breeze; boats were riding at anchor; flags were flapping; wild turkeys were running from wood to wood, gulls and stormy petrels were on watch, land birds were coming in from the north. A Virginia deer was looking on, curious and concerned. High above soared an American eagle, his sharp eyes observing a strange and interesting drama. He saw moving soldiers headed by the Stars and Stripes or following the white flag of France with its golden lily, forming in two lines between which marched troops carrying drooping red standards, their band playing a quaint old English tune, “The World Turned Upside Down.” General O’Hara, in the absence of Cornwallis, tendered his sword to General Lincoln on orders from General Washington; the red coats grounded arms and returned to quarters. The eagle flapped his wings and circled to the North.

The day grew older and dusk came on. The copper-colored storm clouds screening the sun were melting away; the crisp blue evening sky outlined the pines and the autumn tinted foliage. Fine weather for next day was the forecast. The ducks were coming in. The “Honk! honk! honk!” of the leader of a flock of wild geese broke the stillness of the short twilight. These geese too were on the wing. The smoke of burning wood hazed the air. The odor of cooking meat was about. Lights flickered from the bivouacs and boats. General Washington stood looking at this scene of autumn time. He saw it, yet he did not see it. He was thinking of the day and of the morrow. He entered his quarters and closed the door.

During the night hurrying horsemen called out: "Past three o'clock and Cornwallis is taken." The town criers repeated the call. Everyone was up and stirring. The following day and night, and for other days and nights, the news was carried on.

"Oh God, it is all over," cried King George, and so said Lord North. Many an Englishman understood.

Yorktown was over!  
The Colonial days were to end!  
A new nation was then and there born!  
What of its tomorrow?

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Since that event it is now a hundred and forty-two years! Many a milestone has been passed in our journey toward the new civilization that we of today enjoy. As the years have gone by all of us have gotten new ideas of the meaning of nationalism and the national life. Just how we have been impressed depends in part on where we were raised.

My boyhood was spent in Spoon River country in middle Illinois. This garden spot was near the center of the pioneer movement from East to West in the days of timber clearing, and before the value of the then swampy prairie country was known. With the pioneer, land which would not grow trees was no good. Here in the early eighteen hundreds came the folk from New England, from the Central Eastern states, from Virginia and the Carolinas;—plied their different vocations, worshipped God publicly Sundays and prayer meeting nights, and lived in competitive harmony until the coming of the Civil War. These settlers were a representative cross-section of the breeds whose forebears had peopled the Atlantic Coast colonies and had made Yorktown possible. They were pioneers and children of pioneers, with all of the directness and personal competency of those who, having no one else upon whom to depend, must needs do everything for themselves.

Among these pioneers, and a neighbor, was Major Newton Walker, a Virginian by birth, who had built in this Illinois land a replica of the old Colonial brick central-halled

homestead with the smoke-house, tool-house, barns and out-buildings accompanying the integrated plantation life of old Virginia. The Major, Jacksonian in features, tall, lean, active, although then in the eighties, was a source of joy to the youngsters. Many were the tales told by the boys of his past prowess in the hunt and Indian fight; of his accuracy with the long-barrelled flint-lock rifle; his skill in woodcraft. Major Walker was a man of culture; his small library was well selected and ran to history; his memory was especially retentive, and his conversation delightful.

It was the Major who built the courthouse between whose Doric sandstone columns stood Lincoln, an old friend, when delivering one of his Douglas Debate classics. I well remember his chuckle as he told of building a sled in one of the rooms of the courthouse too large to get out through the door. I can still hear the thump, thump, thump of his cane on the sidewalk as he walked to town for his daily paper and his nip of "tea". The Major was a privileged person in a dry community.

In his youth he had been on the staff of the Governor of Virginia, and was in command of the honor guard accompanying General Lafayette in his travels in that State on his second after-the-war visit to America. On many a winter afternoon did he tell me of the General and of other notables he had met—of the battlefields—of Lafayette's visit to Shawneetown—of Mount Vernon; all to my great delight. So I too can say, as did the small boy, "I knew a man who knew the General."

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It is a long jump across the centuries from the rise of Liberalism in Europe to the great American Revolution, which was directed largely against an outworn imperialism.

Now that we can consider calmly the cause and result of great historic events, it is natural that our thoughts should wander back to the European homes of the men and women who came early to the American colonies, and to the time of their leaving. What manner of folk were they, and why did they adventure? It was no Pullman car trip, and courage of a high order was shown by those who made the



journey. There was an unknown factor which must have depressed as well as stimulated. We cannot say that the ignorance of youth took the place of courage, for men and women of all ages journeyed to the wilderness.

From these folk sprang the minute men of the rebellion to be organized into the armies of the cooperating colonies and placed under the unified control of Washington.

We are told in our school days that "action and reaction are equal and opposite." As we read history we are impressed with the thought that with people, "oppression and rebellion may also be equal and opposite." Reaction may be retarded by force, but when opportunity arrives, old scores are quickly evened. Compression makes for explosion. Social forces are dynamic rather than static, and social equilibrium is difficult to maintain. Memories persist and hates hold on indefinitely. Much of the trouble of today is the rebound from past injustice. Nations whose statesmen early sensed the fact that personal liberty, free speech, sacred homes, law observance, and equal opportunity made for stability, have made the greatest progress and attained the maximum of security. Whenever they have departed from this charting, trouble has started.

The story of the war is well known, and we will not review it. We will, however, bring to your attention some of the significant and fundamental questions at issue at the time; questions that always arise in connection with the formation of new states out of old. Since the days of tribal life new nations have been formed out of old in one way or another, but seldom without war. While war may not have always been a necessity, it has generally been a factor in the dividing of any compact race or nation into two or more parts. The formation of the American colonies into a new state was no exception to the rule.

A study of the history of the formation of states will give us a clearer understanding of the difficulties and the achievements of the English colonies in America. Political history is the history of nation-making. Economic history is the record of the behavior of nations in regard to the conservation or use of the forces at their command, and the de-

velopment of commerce, industry, transportation—all that affects the economic welfare of the people. In the evolution of society we are taught that there have developed three distinct methods of nation-making. The first is known as the Oriental method or "conquest without corporation," by which a tribe grew to national dimensions by conquering and annexing its neighbors without admitting them into a share in its political life. The second, known as the Roman method, may be described as "conquest with incorporation," but without representation. The strength of Rome lay in the fact that she incorporated the vanquished people in her own body politic. The third method of nation-making is commonly known as the Teutonic method or English method, containing the *principle of representation*, in accordance with which England and all her colonies have been built.

America is essentially a product of and the best exemplification of the representative principle in nation-making. It is the last fruits of this new principle in the evolution of states. The seeds were no doubt sown in antiquity, but bore little fruit before the Teutonic nations came to the shores of England. The Achaean League formed in old Grecian days is looked upon by historians as an attempt at representative government, but it failed in a great measure because of personal jealousies and heresy among the populace. A few leading thinkers in all nations ancient and modern have kept the flame of representative government burning, though dimly at times.

Having gotten a clear idea of the class of nations to which we belong, it seems proper next to show how we came into being as a nation, why our forefathers left England and the Continent, and how they happened to unite into one great state. The Magna Charta was wrested from King John by the Barons of England on June 15, 1215. It has been called the "keystone of English liberty." It was a treaty of peace between the King and his subjects in arms, but it was also an indication of the rise of the people against royalty and of a general demand for representation in affairs of government. The settlement of English colonies in America and elsewhere is part of the fruit of Magna Charta. The colonies coming to America were composed of men in the various

walks of life feeling their way to a new freedom, a taste of which they had experienced at home but which they could not develop on account of church and state interference.

At the time of the discovery of America by Columbus, the whole of Europe was on the eve of a great awakening. The crusades had come and gone, but their influence was indelibly impressed upon the people. New ideas were drifting in from all quarters. The mariner's compass had been discovered, and under its guidance longer voyages could be undertaken. Gunpowder had just been invented, which changed the character of war and enlarged the scale on which it was waged. Constantinople had just fallen, which resulted in a great revival of learning in all Europe. Driven from the East, learned Greeks and Jews came to settle in Italy, bringing with them the arts, sciences, history, poetry, and philosophy of old Greece and Rome. Just at this time the invention of printing came to spread whatever new ideas there were, with a rapidity never known before.

The discovery of the new world was immediately followed up by Spanish conquests of Mexico and Peru and by Portuguese settlements in Brazil, and by the gaining of a foothold on the eastern shores of North America by the Cabots for England, which is the forerunner of the New England or the extension of Old England across the sea. A way was opened up to the East Indies in 1497 by Vasco de Gama which led to the control of India by the British. Men's minds were prepared for great events, and it is little wonder that Columbus thought he had reached the Orient when he first saw land in the West Indies. No one had ever suspected that there was a great stretch of land almost from pole to pole near half way around the globe from where he started, and what great opportunities there were for a new civilization.

The first discovery of the new mind developed during the Protestant Revolution was the defects of the old Roman civilization. The masses were governed under Roman domination not for the benefit of all, but for the benefit of a few wealthy Roman citizens. The new civilization "sought to secure the common weal of the people." The time had come for the old order gradually to die out and for the new order

gradually to spring up, and that is just what happened. Part of this great movement expressed itself in the colonization of parts of North America by England and the colonization of other parts of North and South America and other parts of the world by other European nations. The whole of Europe was seeking an expression of the new ideas that had been born with the general awakening, and that had helped to dispel much of the superstition of the earlier times. They were working out a way of escape from the domination of kings over the private life and religion of the people. Groups were formed in all the European nations to withdraw from the conditions at home and establish themselves anew in some land that looked more inviting from a distance; many pictured the new world as a paradise in which to carry out their plans of religious and civil liberty.

From the discovery of America in 1492 to the settlement of the first permanent English colony in Virginia in 1607, covering a period of a hundred and fifty years, there was constant conflict between Rome and Protestantism. At times one seemed to have the advantage, and at times the other. The Protestant Revolution during this time severed most of the European states from the political domination of the Pope. This was a great step in the formation of the modern states. It left the people free to organize into representative governments, which they lost no time in doing. The feudal system, now fast dying out, was still a thorn in the flesh of the peasantry, who had already kept up a kind of strike till they had secured money payments for their work instead of labor service. The dawn of commerce on the heels of the Middle Ages was largely responsible for the introduction of money payments for services rendered. This influence was fundamental, as it left workmen and peasants free to wander about and gather up news from everywhere, and incidentally learn what other people in like circumstances were doing. Quoting from Seeborn's **PROTESTANT REVOLUTION**, "The masses of the people in England were more and more becoming a free people, working for wages, while such tenants as remained on the land paid fixed money rents instead of services, and instead of being tied to the land were ejected from their holdings if they could not pay their rents."



This ejection from the small farms added constantly to a vagrant population, robbery was increased, and thieves and vagabonds alike were hung. Many times twenty or more would be seen hanging from a single gibbet.

These peasants now past merging into a free state had not yet participated in the affairs of government, but there was nothing but ignorance to hinder them from doing so. This ignorance was soon giving way to a more popular appreciation of the functions of government, and the movement for universal representation was greatly stimulated by the Peasants' War in Europe beginning in 1525. This is one of the bloodiest chapters in all history, and the horrors are too horrible to be recounted. In Germany over a hundred thousand peasants were killed, which prolonged serfdom in that country till the nineteenth century. What the peasants lost in Germany they gained in other parts of Europe and especially in England, for the Magna Charta had opened the way to them for participation in the affairs of government, and the Barons who wrested the great charter from John had united with the common people against royalty. From that time the peasants no doubt expected much. They were conscious of a kind of freedom that was growing on them, and they felt the pinch of any kind of restriction. When it came they sought a way of escape. Common people had also learned to cooperate with men of affairs, and were ready to take part in ventures for financial gain. Church people had experienced a taste of religious freedom brought about by the significant Protestant Revolution. They were no longer restricted by the state church, but only by their own conscience, and efforts to regulate their conscience on the part of the state brought about rebellion.

This general review of European conditions seems necessary to any intelligent understanding of the colonization of North America by England. All the factors entering into this period of history can not be discussed in a short address, but the above are some of the important ones, and they bring us to the actual settlement of the colonies and to a discussion of the immediate causes of the migration of the colonists in each individual case. Upon careful examination we find that each colony had its own reasons for leaving the mother

country and settling in the new world, but in one way or another they all conformed to the general spirit of the time. They all were seeking adventures as well as religious freedom, or commercial advantage. They were without exception expressing the results of bad conditions in Europe, and various efforts to pull themselves out of that condition.

The first permanent English settlement in America was in Virginia in 1607. England had grown greatly in population during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and needed room for expansion. Thinking men of the time saw an opportunity in planting colonies in America. This would reduce paupers and probably eventually bring a large revenue to the Treasury. On such grounds a charter was granted by King James to a company with two subdivisions: first, The London Company, composed of London merchants who were to establish a colony between the mouth of the Hudson River and North Carolina—or what is now known as North Carolina; second, The Plymouth Company, composed chiefly of traders and country gentlemen in the west of England, with chief offices at Plymouth, who were to plant a settlement somewhere north of the mouth of the Potomac and south of the St. Lawrence. These colonies were directly under the King's control and not under Parliament. The colonies were to be governed by laws dictated by the crown who did not believe in colonization. The land tenure was to be the same as that in England. Trial by jury was guaranteed.

The London Company was the most active of these companies, having among the number of its grantees Hakluyt, perhaps England's then greatest student of world affairs, who had written and edited his long series of VOYAGES. The people coming over as representatives of the London Company were mostly "gentlemen," unused to and scorning manual labor. Only twelve were laborers, and among the artisans were jewelers, gold refiners, and perfumers. There were no women nor children on board, thus showing how little conception they had of the true mission of a colony. John Smith, a member of the company and one of the colonists, was the saviour of the colony. He insisted on the members of the colony cultivating the rich soil, building houses,

trading with the natives, and exploring rather than seeking for gold where there was none. After many hardships and many changes in the plans of the colony it finally proved a success.

The Plymouth Company, which was originally granted a charter at the time The London Company was granted its charter, had made attempts at colonization, but had failed. In 1620 a new charter was granted to the Plymouth Company, extending from Long Branch, New Jersey, to the Bay of Chaleurs, and was to be called New England, the name bestowed upon it by John Smith. The Plymouth Colony consisted of about a hundred yeomen and artisans, members of the independent congregation at Scrooby, a village on the border between Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire. They were skilled in industry, often independent in resources, and well trained in the intellectual controversies of religion and politics. They were seeking in the New World a land where the heavy hand of oppression could not reach them. John Fiske observes that "the aim of Winthrop and his friends in coming to Massachusetts was the construction of a theocratic state which should be to Christians, under the new dispensation, all that the theocracy of Moses and Joshua and Samuel had been to the Jews in Old Testament times. They should be to all intents and purposes freed from the jurisdiction of the Stuart king, and so far as possible the text of Holy Scripture should be their guide both in weighty matters of general legislation and in the shaping of the smallest details of daily life."

Hendrik Hudson sailed up the Hudson River as early as 1609 trying to find a waterway through the North American continent, and the English named the river after him. The Dutch visited the region annually after that, establishing small trading posts till the year 1626, when they established a permanent colony and called it New Netherlands. It was strictly a business enterprise. Efforts were made to transplant the European feudal system in the wilds of America. Patroons or large land owners were to have control over the colonists, and thus build up a landed aristocracy. Internal dissensions and quarrels with New England helped to bring

about the necessary changes in the plans of the colonists to make possible a species of local self government.

Pennsylvania was settled by the persecuted Quakers of England and Germany. William Penn established the colony in 1681, both as a refuge for Quakers and as a real estate venture. The English Government owed him sixteen thousand pounds, and he persuaded it to give him instead of the money, a proprietary charter of forty thousand square miles of land in America. Penn is said to have widely advertised his grant and to have offered small parcels of this land to prospective purchasers at the rate of two pounds per acre. In this way he soon had gathered around him a very large colony. He proposed from the beginning to establish a popular government based on the principle of exact justice to all regardless of religious beliefs. He drew to this colony Quakers, Dutch, Swedes, Germans, and Welsh alike. The people soon began to grow uneasy under the proprietary government and boundary disputes constantly harassed Penn. Delaware was made a separate colony in 1703.

The Carolinas were peopled from other colonies in North America and from the Bahamas and the West Indies. The English were dominant in all the colonies, but especially so in the south. In North Carolina industry attracted many immigrants, "in the main French Huguenots, Moravians, and Germans, with some Swiss, and Scotch-Irish." The soil was favorable to agriculture and most of the colonists developed into farmers, and the towns were insignificant. The south was a favorable place for the growth and development of slavery. The climate was mild, the farm lands fairly fertile, and slave labor paid. The middle and upper classes grew into a very strong and sturdy citizenship. They had leisure, and many of them were intensely industrious intellectually. From such people came Calhoun, Jefferson, Stephens and others.

The colony of Georgia was settled in 1632 under the leadership of James Oglethorpe, a prominent member of Parliament, and an army officer. He had been active in effecting many reforms in England, and on inspection of prisons he found many worthy men in prison on account of debt. He



asked for a charter or grant of land to settle these in the Carolina country, to be known as Georgia after the name of the King. Shortly a body of Germans settled at Ebenezer on the Savannah River just north of Savannah. The slow development of the Georgia colony caused Oglethorpe to infuse into the settlement a party of Scotch Highlanders and German Protestants, and there was great improvement. At all times from the founding there were many idlers and worthless fellows.

To the south of Georgia was the Spanish settlement of Florida, which had long been in a flourishing condition, a constant menace to the English colonies on the South. North of the St. Lawrence River were the French, a constant menace to the English colonies on the North. A large colony of French had settled around the mouth of the Mississippi River and had worked its way up the river. The French to the north had explored far to the west on the Great Lakes, and it may be said that the English on the East coast were almost surrounded by the French at the time of the Revolution. This is very significant for the reason that France was looking for an opportunity to assist the colonies against England, her ancient foe.

Up to 1700 each colony was a small unit all to itself. A thousand impulses filled the colonists in successive waves, but each little commonwealth "had its own interest, its own struggles, and looked forward to its own future." The constant disturbances by wars with the Indians, recurring domestic political quarrels, and constant disputes with the mother country gradually brought the colonies to cultivate each other's friendship. The commerce and industry so rapidly growing up in the colonies brought many immigrants and much capital, and the country as a whole grew very rapidly between 1700 and 1760. Many of the charters were attacked by England, and this was a surprise to the little states, which heretofore had not regarded seriously any interference from England.

These then were the elements which in time of need came together and organized for the common defense. They were daring spirits—adventurous, unafraid. They would not sub-

mit for long to any attempt on the part of the mother country to extend bureaucratic methods and control across the sea, to exploit by taxing, to punish by diversion of commerce and through other oppressive measures. After their coming their energies were directed to the subduing of the wilderness, to the development of resources, to the creation of wealth, to the opening up of opportunities for those to come later. They were exhilarated by their freedom and determined to maintain it. There was an important group in England who understood the colonial attitude and whose influence caused the repeal of acts calculated to develop resistance, but these repeal measures were always enacted too late to repair the damage. Coercive measures were again put in force, and the final break came. King's judgments and Tory mentalities were incapable of understanding the needs and attitudes of these pioneers, people who were hard at the task of conquering and developing a new world, and who were soon to be called on to organize and launch a new plan of government destined to become a great power for good throughout the world.

On the political side we have not always been safe, for while the blending of many nationalities to form one nation was not a new experiment, yet it was not accomplished without much difficulty. Fiske says that "the need for union was not generally felt by the people. The sympathies of the colonies were weak and likely to be overborne by prejudices arising from rivalry or from the differences in social structure. To the merchant of Boston the Virginia planter was still almost a foreigner, although both the one and the other were pureblood Englishmen. Commercial jealousies were keen, boundary disputes not uncommon."

The blending of these various elements may be considered almost a miracle. The one great thought that dominated all was freedom, and the hardest fight in all the efforts to combine the colonies against the mother country was to effect a union without losing any of the freedom exercised by the individual colonies. The various colonies were up to the time of the Revolution several independent states. They knew no restrictions from their neighbors and little from England. They were therefore afraid they would lose by union what



they had gained in isolation. They were in sight of the long sought freedom; why should they bind themselves into a union whereby they would have to give all or part of it up? Was there any way to get out from under the wing of England without losing any of the freedom they had learned to enjoy? These were questions of extreme importance to all the colonies. The large plantations of Virginia were small empires in themselves, and the independent merchants of Boston had developed channels of commerce that they did not wish to share with others.

The framing of the Articles of Confederation was an attempt at a middle course. It was an evidence of a need of union and at the same time an effort to maintain the largest possible degree of independence among the colonists.

Whatever the source of their political ideals, the colonists blended into a cosmopolitan republic having drawn their citizenship from the four quarters of the globe, though the first settlers were almost entirely from the west coast of Europe. The colonies evidently got their ideas of government from as many sources as the people came from, but some of the fundamental ideas inherited from the early English institutions were:

1. The idea of the supremacy of *law*.
2. The conception of an unwritten law, or the binding power of custom, which probably is the source of most of our "*common law*."
3. The conception of a law superior to the law-making body from which the charters originated on which the colonies were founded. Before the *courts* and before the *tax-gatherers* all England stood practically on the same basis, and this has been the ideal for which the American Republic has striven since Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown.

While in their efforts to work out a system of government the colonies followed rather closely the English institutions, there was a fundamental difference in that American integration from the beginning has been federal, while the English method was always absorptive, incorporative. Up to the time of and during the Revolution the union of the colonies was distinctly federative—a matter of concession and con-

tract. At the close of the Revolution the time had come for these loosely constructed units of government to take stock of their political structure and to build themselves into a common state. They did not have a law for this federation till the framing of the Articles of Confederation in 1777. Before then they had cooperated by common consent, but without any determinative law. In 1781 the Articles of Confederation were adopted, but the colonies found themselves bound together so loosely that they had to reconstruct the entire instrument and this resulted in the written Constitution of the United States adopted by the Continental Congress in session in the summer of 1787.

The colonists won. The French, who at the time were developing the ferment leading to a new political and economic freedom, were of master service in enabling the colonists to drop the "prelude" curtain of the now-to-be-presented new political drama entitled "Representative Government, By and For the People." The plot for the new presentation came from the experience, understandings and vision of a courageous, determined, industrious, intelligent, freedom-loving, history-comprehending people, possessing a high order of organizing ability and a genius for compromising serious differences. The text for the drama was written by men of rare culture and understanding. The language used was English, and no translations were necessary. The story is still being presented to a steadily increasing and generally appreciative audience. Many of the acts have disclosed rare heroism and unselfishness. Some have proven dull, even sordid. Out of it all has come great good to many people; unusual opportunities for success in attaining material comforts and the finer things of life; religious freedom; education; travel.

It has been said that Britain wins but one battle in her wars—the last one. Britain lost at Yorktown, but Britain and the Empire gained much from the losing. She learned that her sons and daughters when they became colonists must and will live their own lives and work out their own destinies. They may perhaps listen to advice, but they will not take orders. They will voluntarily contribute to the common good, but they will not honor demand drafts. England

learned that the problem of the pioneer must be solved by the pioneer, and on the spot; that Colonial Offices and officious home bureaucrats are talking to the winds if they seriously attempt to direct the movements of their sons across seas. All this they learned many years ago. The pre-war Colonial Office of Germany, through the local governor general, advised their Southeast African colonists where and what to plant on their newly settled farms. Did the German Government successfully colonize? It did not.

Britain also learned another lesson—that a war, when it is over, should be kept over; and has always worked hard to bring this about. The handling of the Boers after the war with those fine people is a splendid example of appreciation by a government of the feelings and aspirations of a former enemy, and from this treatment came the superb loyalty and support of the Boers in the late war and in the peace councils. Equality and fraternity in practice.

As has been said, England learned much of value from the Revolution and from the developments of the succeeding years. France was stirred. The old feudal divine right theory was still going strong in other Continental countries, and the American experiment was anathema. Monarchies always have shown bulldog characteristics both as to hang-on and mentality. Liberal ideas and changes seldom appeal to them. As "two heads are better than one," and as many of these states didn't have much of one head, their progress was slow. Gradually parliamentary governments were introduced and men of importance were given the vote. One may safely say that the continuing success of the American plan has profoundly impressed other governments and has made for greater freedom.

The framers of the new government resented outside control. They feared too much central authority. They limited the power and authority of the federal government by a written constitution. Good government starts with the private home, and is reflected in community life. If the ability to direct and protect is not found in the community, its lack is immediately reflected in the political bodies selected by the community. The approvers of the Constitution wanted to

run their home affairs themselves. They were keen on preventing federal pilfering of their local responsibilities. Nowadays this doesn't seem to be resented. Many newcomers are here, men trained under monarchical conditions and accustomed to the rule of a centralized government occupying a comparatively small area. They know little about our plan of government and the causes which led to its adoption, and do not oppose a federal encroachment on state powers and responsibilities which is worrying many thoughtful people who fear bureaucratic government. As a nation it behooves us to both keep watch over our institutions and to endeavor to educate the newcomer in the proper direction.

Since the Revolutionary War many peoples have come to our hospitable shores and have been incorporated in our citizenry. Social and economic disturbance has had much to do with their coming. In 1846 the potato rot in Ireland and the following famine caused a million and a quarter of the Irish to come here, between the years 1845 and 1855. German migration reached flood tide in 1854, on political grounds, and in 1882 on military and economic grounds. The English and Scandinavians came in large numbers during the middle of the nineteenth century. The Italians began coming in large numbers about 1882, and gradually increased till in 1895, 287,000 migrated to America. The Russian Empire is third in the rank of contributors to our immigration. This migration began in 1881, and by 1906 reached 216,000 for that year. Only 2 per cent of them were Russians and 98 per cent non-Russian. Russia sends us five-sixths of our Jewish immigrants.

The earlier after-war immigrants did their share of pioneering under frontier conditions, learned to depend on themselves, and soon sensed and approved of the ideals of the fathers. Later comers, more largely town populators and with easier going, have been slower to grasp them.

We are told that all we learn from history is that we do not learn from history. While this is an extreme statement, there is unfortunately too much truth in it. History is dry, uninteresting reading to most of us. Deductions are difficult. The underlying causes which lead to social and



economic upsets are often obscure and too near the grass for the average person to comprehend. "To the devil's home with tomorrow; let's cash in today," is too often the code of the man of action, whether he be a politician, a banker, a business man, or a farmer. Immediate exploitation is the order du jour, and the "go-getter" the idol of the times.

Prompt decision and "go getting" methods are fundamental, but the end desired should be one which promotes the general welfare of today and at the same time protects as far as possible the needs of those of tomorrow.

Fear is probably the greatest enemy of mankind, and the prime mover in much of the world's deviltry. Uncontrolled, stupid power uses the "scourge" to enforce its will. Terrorized groups do not function efficiently or sleep soundly. The alley cat through inherited fear as well as from actual experience trusts no one, and to teach him to have confidence in a small boy and his pup is a difficult undertaking in education. The people of continental Europe, through ages of sad, cruel experience with the ways of many of their kings, and the habits of soldiers and revolutionaries, have had their old fears relighted by their recent trials, and it is small wonder they keep their powder dry.

The fathers were distrustful of class distinction. They were opposed to *any* class dominating their doings. They were strong for equal opportunity and did not resent success if it smiled and was decent mannered. They had much to do and they did it well.

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It will perhaps be on the basis of representative government that the longevity of nations will depend in the future. One can not look searchingly into the history of nations without being impressed with the fact that nations, like individuals, die—or, as Draper well puts it, "Nations are but sandhills in the hourglass of time; they decay and die by the same processes by which they attain their growth." The only new principle that has been evolved in modern times is this theory of representation. Will it prolong the life of nations, and to what extent? Will modern nations live longer than

Egypt, the ancient nation that had the longest life of recorded history? Has Yorktown set a new precedent? And are we building a nation that is to make the world record for longevity? These are questions that interest the speculative student, and they are practical questions, for their favorable solution will depend on our progress of building and on the finer adjustment of race to race and nation to nation, now being fused into our American life, and on the proper adjustment to and conservation of our natural resources. The health of an individual today depends on how he lived yesterday, and so it is with nations. Better planning and living today means greater prosperity and greater insurance of good health tomorrow. This applies to the conservation of our soils, our forests, our water power, and our large supplies of metals and coal. To use these materials properly now is to insure longer life as a nation, and better living while we do live.

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The flags of America and France were saluted at Yorktown. Washington and the gallant officers and men of the Continental army, those hard-hitting, red-blooded fighters, de Grasse, Rochambeau, LaFayette, and the French rank and file; the silent, suffering mothers; the girls and boys; the Molly Pitchers—all were saluted at Yorktown. And so were those wonderful intellects, the statesmen, financiers and councilors, who worked so well, Franklin, Morris, Adams.

All of those whose memories we revere, the gone but never forgotten, the heroes of the Revolution! We, too, salute them!